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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of the beginnings of the newspaper in Brazil with information on the more significant titles and their role in the history of journalism and their impact on social change that occurred between the Imperial and Republican periods. Current collections at the National Library and legal deposit are discussed. It describes the present and historical collections and efforts to preserve them through microfilming and digitizing processes. Some statistics are provided for the collections and microfilms that have been made available. Brief information on the online access of the newspaper periodical databases is also given. (MES)

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Brazilian History through Journalism

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Abstract:

The paper gives a general view on the beginnings of the newspaper in the country with information on the more significant titles and their role on the history of journalism and impact on social changes between the Imperial and Republican periods. It also describes the present and historical collections and efforts to preserve it through microfilming and digitizing processes. Some statistics are provided for the collection and microfilms available. It gives brief information on the on-line access of the newspaper periodical data bases.

1. The origin of the newspaper collection at the National Library

The newspaper collection of the National Library of Brazil is the most complete nationwide as well as the oldest. One of its characteristics is to assemble all national newspapers of large circulation, as well as regional and local newspapers.

The origin of the collection dates from 1808 with the arrival of the Royal Portuguese Library in Brazil brought by the Regent of Portugal, D. João VI, whom was forced to flee Portugal, after the invasion by Napoleon.

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This historic event marked the creation of the National Library.

2. Brazilian Press history

The Brazilian press began in 1808. Previous attempts were aborted by the Metropolis (Portugal), which was concerned with the spread of dangerous French ideas such as the ones behind the French Revolution based on the tripod Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In 1808 with the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Rio de Janeiro it came along the typographical office, officially entitled Royal press, which decree of its creation in Brazil dates from 10 Set 1808. At the same year it appeared in London, the "Correio Brasiliense" initiative of a renowned journalist who stated that it was easier to print outside national frontiers to be able to be out of reach of censorship of the Prince Regent's Government, since all material had to be revised by the three royal censors of the time.

The "Correio Brasiliense" was not a new vehicle but a doctrinal courier defined as the only Portuguese periodical of the time to have independence of views, since it was edited outside of the royal domains and had a leading figure behind it, who demonstrate all the gaps and flows of the Brazilian administration. This newspaper started the press tradition in Brazil to be the dogwatch of the public administration.

This newspaper circulated monthly from 1808 to 1822 printed in London and covered all the period of the transfer of the Royal family to Rio de Janeiro up to the Independence. The National Library maintain its complete collection of 29 volumes.

Meanwhile, in Rio de Janeiro, it was launched the "Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro", which was to be the first Brazilian newspaper printed in Brazil. Naturally, it was an official vehicle and represented the government views without criticism or doctrinal opinions but solely news. Other newspapers appeared to reinforce this tendency such as "A Idade de Ouro" (printed in Bahia in 1811).

It is important to identify the role of the press in the evolution of the democratic thinking and that is why the "Correio Brasiliense" even though published in London is mentioned here. It's counter attack was the launching of the "O Investigador Português", which had the main task to publicize widely government views.

Certainly, these tendencies were before the Independence of Brazil and it is relevant to stress that journalism played an important role on the process of development of the political thinking of the nation and national press campaigns reflected the new thinking and timid steps towards a politically strong nation.

This movement was spread in the provinces, which produced several newspapers. The first was the "Compilador Mineiro" in Minas Gerais in 1823; "O Farol Paulistano", a liberal newspaper in 1827 and in Rio Grande do Sul the "Diário de Porto Alegre" in 1827.

One eco of the independent thinking was in 1822 when the Portuguese dissolved the Legislative House, and the provinces fought against this action that represented the orientation of the Central Government. One of the newspaper, the "Gazeta Pernambucana" which in 1823 became a column for protests against despotism and the lost of liberal constitutionalism, which was a goal to be achieved in the views of the intellectual classes.

Another important step in the history of the Brazilian press was the newspaper "Sentinela da Liberdade na Guarita" de Pernambuco, which appeared in 1823 in the middle of the constitutional

fights of the Brazilian Empire. This newspaper tried to raise the public opinion against the danger of not having a Liberal Constitution.

There are innumerous examples of the efforts of the liberal thinking through the press but it is the movement of abolition of Slavery and the fight for the Republic that have marked the history of Brazil by way of journalism and the influence of eminent journalists who fought for these ideals.

The role of the press was extremely relevant and decisive to reach, gradually, the total abolition of slavery. All newspapers from the provinces joined the campaign to fight against slavery. Mainly the "Diário de São Paulo", which today is the most intellectual and politically oriented newspaper with the largest circulation in the country which in 1889, with the Republic, altered its title to "O Estado de São Paulo".

Intellectual and eminent journalists lead the way in their columns and advocate the abolition of slavery along with the campaign for the Republic, mainly after the end of the war with Paraguai. One of the leading figures was an ex-slave turned into poet and journalist among very illustrious names such as Rui Barbosa.

Finally the Aurea Law, in 1888 abolish the slavery in Brazil, and the Republic, after one year, imposed itself little by little thanks to the very decisive press action to propagate the ideals of the Republic.

It can be said with certainty that the newspaper press in Brazil had a very active participation in all moments of the history of the nation, which places our newspapers collection as a tombstone for research on the cultural and political development of the Brazilian Nation.

3. Current Collections and legal deposit

Legal deposit was one of the first preoccupations of the Imperial government after the Independence, in 1822. The aim was to collect and preserve all printing production in the country either bibliographical or serial. So in 12 of November 1822, it was determined that the National Printing Office should send to the Imperial and Public Library of the Court – the National Library of today – one sample of all works such as books or serials, pages or volatile material printed. This first act established the legal deposit of published material in the independent Brazilian nation. This act had been preceded by other acts while the government was still in Portugal, such as the act, which obliged the deposit of material printed by the Royal Press (Impressão Régia), which signed in 1805 by the Prince Regent made it obligatory the deposit of all printed material from all printing presses.

Finally, after several acts in between, in 20 December 1907 it was promulgated the Decree 1825, which is on force still today and took away from the states the right to collect material and centralized it at the National Library.

The role of the newspaper collection was not always understood by the different administrations at the Library and the physical conditions of the collections are a reason for concern with their brittleness and many years of bad air conditioning and lack of maintenance and good preservation practices.

The collection is the biggest in the country and it assembles more than 55.250 titles of serials of which 5.244 are newspapers with 297.516 collections with the rate of receipt of newspapers fascicules around 37.000 annually, covering wide circulation newspaper as well as regional and

local circulation, which vary enormously in their coverage since the largest circulation is around 471.000 copies. In total there are 465 daily newspapers in Brazil of which less than 9 newspapers have a circulation of 100.000. Special agreements with the Brazilian Association of Regional Newspapers (ABRAJORI) ensure the receipt of 1800 regional titles monthly, covering small circulation newspapers with local news.

The newspaper collection of the National Library is considered the last resort collection of the daily printed collective memory, since the policy of newspaper editors are to discard their back issues and any social and cultural research on historical developments rely on the National Library collection.

For this reason the present Administration is giving a strong support to the combination of the microfilming for preservation alongside with modern techniques of digitizing and Internet access.

4. Newspaper Microfilming for preservation

So it is the responsibility of the National Library to preserve serial and newspaper collections and it has developed a national plan to fulfill this historical task.

The National Plan of Microfilming **(PLANO)** started back in 1978 aiming at researching, identifying and reproducing microfilms of newspaper nationwide to complete the national newspaper collection at the National Library and at the same time, to establish local microfilming units at Public Libraries or university libraries which should continue the work of preservation microfilming of their collection. It operates through agreements with nine institutions from five Brazilian states, providing technical expertise to install microfilming laboratories and offer technical courses for recycling personnel, while producing technical manuals to be distributed to students and collaborating institutions. This project was very successful but costs went up since raw material needed was not founded and the project faded away slowly.

In consequence, on 1997 with the change of administration an analysis was made and it became clear that the microfilming laboratory at the National Library was in crisis with broken up machines, lack of raw material and staff and it had to be given a remodeling priority Since then, in order to carry on with routine work, as well as with the national commitments, the microfilming laboratory has been totally remodeled to solve problems of faulty air conditioning, lighting and electrical wiring. The existing equipment acquired back in 1982 underwent major repairs. Additionally, new equipment was obtained through donations from Lampadia Foundation.

It resulted, at present, in a very active laboratory with a program to receive all newspapers, to fulfill gaps and obtain back issues to complete the national newspapers collection. An expansion of the Laboratory was also undertaken which added a storage area for microfilm masters which houses an additional 20.000 rolls totaling 40.000 (200 linear meters each) in 60 square meters with compact shelving. Nevertheless, this expansion is still not ideal, but it has solved the storage problems, temporarily.

Apart from regional agreements and individual requests ten of the major daily Brazilian newspapers have a contract for current microfilming reproduction, for which 10.000 copies in paper and 697.000 photograms were made in 2000. It also microfilms systematically 72 current serials, and carries on with the Library of Congress a joint program for microfilming nine current titles of Brazilian newspapers to be added to their collection. Statistics for the year 2000 show a production of around 1000 rolls (totaling 1 million pages), providing a basis on which to forecast microfilm production in the future.

Another important development is the availability on the Intranet of a Microfilm Database registering 2.600 microfilmed serial titles, current and extinct at the Web site, making it possible to request copies while consulting the database. Remote users will be informed of the microfilms in existence and can make requests on line to obtain copies in FTP, diskettes or CD-ROM.

5. Preservation and on line access of historical collection

The 19th century newspaper collection at the National Library has been processed separately from the current newspaper collection and is located at the Rare Collection Division. For this reason, it has separate cataloguing and its access is restricted to researchers. In order to enable its access, subrogates forms, either microfilm or digital archives, are been made available.

The historical collection has gone through the process of preservation and is kept in boxes after clearing and dusting. This treatment also intervenes in all newspaper going through microfilming to keep it out of use but in good conditions of preservation.

Also, for the microfilm reproduction a catalog locates newspapers in other libraries in Brazil. This collaborative effort is also part of the ABINIA's proposal of identifying rare collections throughout Ibero American countries which produced a CD-ROM by the National Library of Spain entitled *Novum Regestrum*.This project also intends to go on line shortly to enable researchers to access it by Internet. As part of this cooperation it contributed to ABINIA's publication on Iberoamerican newspapers of the XIX century, which also was produced in CD-ROM.

The Brazilian catalog of Rare newspapers is available at the site of the National Library of Brazil and permits download and on-line contribution from the participating libraries to update its catalog as result of the conversion done in 1999 from the Micro Isis format catalog to a new platform on SQL. It assembles 7.145 registers including historical newspapers (5.850 titles) and rare books (1.295 titles) already microfilmed.

6. Move to a Virtual Collection

The creation of art image database for maps, photographs, rare newspapers and manuscripts at the National Library is worth mentioning since it opened up horizons for a large-scale project. The availability of these images connected to the bibliographical register at the Web site has created a new situation of providing remote users with material available only at the National Library.

Nevertheless, a digitizing project per se, implies a series of measures and a staff trained in selection, conservation, digital reproduction and a sound methodology for digitizing, including metadata identification. At present, the National Library has obtained a grant to start Retrocom of newspaper collections and digitizing of part of its collections and building a metadata database gateway.

The virtual library catalog make it possible to obtain copies on paper collection, as well as digital files with image and full text resulting from the digitizing process.

These on line files permit the downloading of records, images and full text from USMAR, ISO 2709, ANSI, Z3947, OEM accessing with any combination according to the software and platform in use by the library. The only unique feature necessary is online access and Z39.50 platform to download registers by libraries which are already linked to the National Library through the Electronic Consortium of Libraries that permit access (login and password) to university and public libraries with public funding.

At present, a digitize unit deals with equipment that transfers from microfilm and film to digital object and it is operating at the Microfilm Laboratory. The program covers uniquely these formats since the machines in question operate solely from these supports.
A small portion of this material selected among the rare book collection has already been digitized and made available at the Web site for information.

Already a footage of 25.100 rolls of microfilm corresponding to around 12.700 titles and 20 million pages will be object of a selection for digitizing. Out of this mass of information the part concerning serials is contained in 2.000 rolls for historical serials,8.600 for extinct serials and 12.800 for current serials. On the other hand, funds are being identified to provide for the acquisition of new equipment, which will work from paper support to digital objects.
It is hoped that these new features of online data bases, as well as virtual library will modernize the services provided at present for newspaper research by local and remote users.

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